WORLD PARISH

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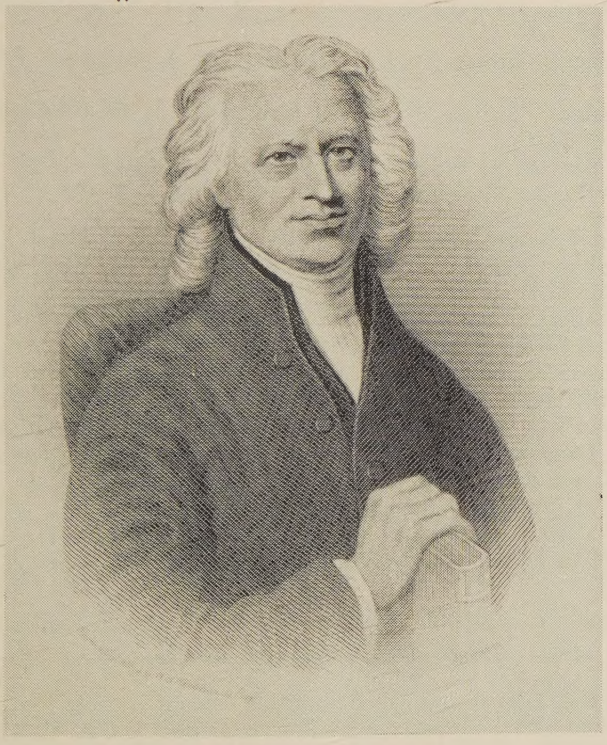

FRANCIS ASBURY

This picture of Asbury as a young man in England was used as the frontispiece to Briggs' *Bishop Asbury, a Biographical Study,* in 1879. The portrait is at the Asbury Memorial Church in Birmingham, England, and a similar one is at Handsworth College.

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Movements Toward Church Union in the United States

A Statement for discussion at the Executive Committee of the World Methodist Council, Birmingham, England

by CHARLES C. PARLIN

There are 23 denominations in the United States bearing the word "Methodist." Of these only six are members of the World Methodist Council. These are The Methodist Church, with above 9,000,000 members, of which 350,000 are Negroes; the African Methodist Episcopal Church, with approximately 1,000,000 members; the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, with approximately 525,000 members; the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, with approximately 385,000 members; the Free Methodist Church, with approximately 50,000 members; the Primitive Methodist Church, with about 12,000 members; and the Wesleyan Methodist Church, with approximately 35,000 members. The others are relatively small and, for the most part, have practices or doctrines which set them apart from the main stream of American Methodism.

A discussion of Methodist union in the United States necessarily leads into a discussion of the racial problem and the independent Negro bodies. As this matter is to be covered separately I will make no reference to it here. Suffice it to say that the large Negro churches represent an important part of the Church life in America.

THE METHODIST CHURCH IN THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

The Methodist Church has played a definite part in the Ecumenical Movement. Bishop Holt serves as President of the World Methodist Council, Methodist Commission on Church Union, and Conference on Church Union, to which reference will be made. Bishop Martin is currently President of the National Council of Churches of Christ in America, and Bishop Oxnam is a President of the World Council of Churches. In the National and World Councils The Methodist Church

contributes a substantial part of the respective budgets. It is fair to say that it has outstandingly contributed to the Ecumenical Movement both financially and in the matter of distinguished leadership.

The Commission on Church Union

To the General Conference of 1948 the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States addressed a communication requesting discussions on approaches toward union. It was primarily in response to this request that the General Conference established a Commission on Church Union which was continued by the 1952 Conference. The Commission is composed of 18 members—one Bishop, one other Clergyman and one Layman from each of the six Jurisdictions. The Commission's authority is thus stated:

> "(1) to consider specific overtures or proposals for organic union with other denominations and report to the General Conference,
>
> (2) to initiate studies looking toward organic union,
>
> (3) to confer with representatives of other denominations in any general discussion of church union,
>
> (4) to encourage interdenominational cooperation throughout the church and to have responsibility for any interdenominational activities not specifically cared for by other agencies."

World Methodists

There is a strong feeling in many quarters that effort should be made to tighten the bonds of union with other Methodists throughout the world. Many important persons in the Church were critical of the 1951 Oxford Conference because it had not progressed as far toward a united body as was reasonably to be anticipated. For example, Dr John R. Mott stated that the representatives at Oxford had been "far too cautious." This problem should certainly be explored.

Federal Union of Churches

This movement, promoted by Dr. E. Stanley Jones, calls for the formation of a union of churches. It would create a single unit, but each denomination would remain intact as a branch. Such Federal Union would be more than a council, but each church in it would keep its name, doctrines and polity. To date this movement has received no support from the organized leadership of the denominations. It is being pressed at the "'grass roots" level by mass meetings throughout the country. These meetings are largely and enthusiastically attended and from them come rousing resolutions calling for union of the churches.

In the public mind, however, there is much confusion. We find that in many instances support has been given and contributions have been made under the misconception that it is part of the World or National Council of Churches. At the General Conference of 1948 and again in 1952 its representatives appeared before the Committee on the State of the Church and attempted, through it, to bring to the floor

resolutions requiring the Commission on Church Union to explore and lead The Methodist Church into the movement. In each instance this failed in Committee by an overwhelming vote.

It is the feeling of the Commission on Church Union that this plan of Federal Union has little to offer in addition to what has already been achieved through our National Council of Churches, that it is running parallel to or perhaps even in conflict with the work of the National Council, and that it would be a deterrent rather than an aid to the attainment of the great ecumenical goal toward which our people are looking. The Commission has no official participation in the movement.

The Conference on Church Union

The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America could not itself propose organic merger. It did, however, issue a call for a meeting of those churches which desired to consider union, to be held at Greenwich, Conn., on December 14-16, 1949, in accordance with resolutions adopted by the Congregational Christian Churches and the Disciples of Christ. The following churches were officially represented:

Congregational Christian Churches
Disciples of Christ
Evangelical and Reformed Church
Methodist Church
Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.
A.M.E. Zion Church
Colored Methodist Episcopal Church
National Council of Community Churches

The Protestant Episcopal Church sent observers. Bishop Holt was elected chairman of the group and it was agreed that a plan of organic union should be prepared to include those denominations which now recognize as valid each other's ministries. A drafting committee was appointed, with representatives from each church, the Methodist representatives being Bishop Holt, Dr. Nolan Harmon, Dr. J. M. Versteeg and Mr. Charles C. Parlin. At a meeting in Cincinnati on January 23-24, 1951, the first draft was presented to a joint meeting of the commissions of the participating denominations for review and criticism. Because the draft was discussed, criticized and referred back to the drafting committee, certain newspapers reported the failure of an attempt at union. This was a misunderstanding; nobody expected or desired the adoption of a plan at this first meeting of the commissions.

Work on this project is continuing but with some setbacks. The Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. has withdrawn, at least temporarily, and the Congregational Christian Churches are in litigation concerning their right to merge.

Among the group of denominations which have no vital differences in theology, the problem is to reconcile differences of conviction regarding a centralized governing authority or a strictly congregational

form of government. The present draft of plan calls for an Episcopal form of government, which would require an important concession by the congregational-type churches, but it also calls for a high degree of authority in the local church. This lack of a central authority above the local church and over the placing and transferring of ministers, our Methodist group in America finds difficult of acceptance. Plans call for further studies by the drafting committee and eventually the calling of a second joint meeting of all commissions. Such meeting has not been called and there is nothing now before the denominations.

The Protestant Episcopal Church

Some years before the Uniting Conference of Methodism in 1939 there were informal conversations between the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., and the Protestant Episcopal Church, looking toward union. The Methodist Episcopal Church withdrew from these discussions in order to consummate Methodist union. In 1942 representatives of The Methodist Church and the Protestant Episcopal Church met in Cleveland. It was decided to continue discussions but no further joint meetings were held until 1947. At the 1948 General Conference in Boston there was a proposal from the Commission of the Protestant Episcopal Church for further discussions, and this had hearty endorsement from two bishops of that who spoke to us, Bishop Sherrill, the Presiding Bishop, and Bishop Nash, the Bishop of Massachusetts. The discussions into which our Commission has entered mark the third effort in a generation to bring these two bodies together.

Our Commission has met with the Episcopal Commission on Approaches to Unity over the past five years. Our first meetings dealt primarily with the non-theological obstacles to organic union. Among the factors considered were: a possible difference in attitude toward liquor, amusements and labor-management problems; the fact that the two memberships were largely in different economic and social scales; a probably difference in opinion as to the best form of worship service; a fear on the part of the Episcopal group that the Methodists had too much emotionalism; and further fear that the relative size of the two denominations made organic merger for the Episcopalians dangerous and unwise. The Methodists number about 9,000,000 and the Episcopalians about 2,000,000. As one Episcopalian put it: "It would be like the merger of Jonah and the whale." On the other hand, all were impressed by the common heritage and history, the common recognition of the two sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, the fact that our rituals are so nearly identical, the similarity of our church polity, and the growing conviction that Christ's church should be one and not divided.

In succeeding meetings we studied (1) organic union, and (2) procedures which would lead to intercommunion and a growing together by living and working together.

As a basis for these discussions the following papers were prepared and read; in some instances papers on the same subject were read by a member of each Commission:

Concept of the Church
The Sacrament of Baptism
The Sacrament of Holy Communion
The Ministry
Implications of Organic Union as Affecting World Connections of The Methodist Church
Implications of Organic Union as Affecting World Connections of The Protestant Episcopal Church
Intercommunion

These papers have since been published.

No plan of union has been drafted and present study is being directed to the prospects of intercommunion through an extension of the orders of the clergy in each of the two churches. With this problem solved, it seems likely that their common history and heritages will inevitably draw these two great denominations together. The Commissions are considering a proposal for extension of orders through reciprocal, supplemental consecration of such of the Bishops of the two denominations as would voluntarily accept such. Such supplemental consecration of a Methodist Bishop by the Episcopal Bishops would bring the Methodist Bishop and any minister subsequently ordained by him into the apostolic succession as understood by the Church of England and the many denominations which share this concept and are now on a basis of intercommunion. Any such Bishop and any such minister would then be qualified to administer the sacraments in an Episcopal Church, and presumably in churches of other related denominations.

Today in America there are many places where new opportunities for wider Christian service would be opened to our ministers in this manner. Generally speaking, the Episcopal Church centers on our eastern seaboard, whereas Methodism has spread through the middle and far west where today many Anglicans in smaller towns are without benefit of their traditional sacraments. We are advised that some, at least, of the Episcopal Bishops would welcome such supplemental consecration of our Methodist Bishops, feeling that by such act they would come into the line and the heritage of the dynamic evangelism of John Wesley and his followers and that there was being restored to the ministry of their church something which the Church of England and its ministry lost when they lost "the people called Methodists." Some of our Bishops, for example, Bishop Holt and Bishop Oxnam, have publicly stated their willingness to enter into some such reciprocal consecration ceremony. Some of the Bishops of the Episcopal Church have likewise evidenced their willingness to do so—notably Bishop Keeler and Bishop Gibson, both members of the Protestant Episcopal Commission on Approaches to Unity.

It should be noted, however, that this is not universally accepted. For example, Dr. Clarence Tucker Craig, a recognized theologian and Dean of the Theological Seminary of Drew University, in one of his books, *The One Church,* stated: "Speaking for myself, I must say that to accept reordination or so-called extension of ordination would mean for me a definite violation of conscience." Within the Episcopal group there is similar resistance.

The Evangelical-United Brethren Church

The history, doctrines and polities of this church are so similar to The Methodist Church that union would appear to be a matter of form. The German language barrier which once existed has now all but disappeared. The relative small size of the other denomination raises a problem but the Commission hopes to work out a formula which can bring the churches together in the near future.

The Ecumenical Movement—What Direction?

The Commission on Church Union has been criticized from time to time for moving in all directions and arriving nowhere. This criticism is perhaps justified, although the Commission itself has consistently voted to continue exploration on all fronts even though some of the activities may appear on the surface to be inconsistent.

Should effort be directed toward strengthening our Methodist ties in a world fellowship, or should our emphasis be placed on working with other denominations in forming the united church in the United States?

Opinions differ sharply on this point. Speaking only for myself I believe that our emphasis should be on strengtheing our World Methodism. My work as a lawyer engaged in the field of international law has brought a realization of the problems of nationalism. I have struggled with national trade barriers and fiscal restrictions. I have seen a sense of nationalism lead countries to war and retaliation in the economic field. I would feel badly if this sense of nationalism was the catalyst which would bring our churches together so that the World Council of Churches would turn out to be nothing more than a meeting of the nations of the world—a United Nations in the ecclesiastical field. Personally I would much rather see our World Council of Churches move toward a meeting of the great communions which would cut across national barriers and national prejudices. The unsolved problem is how to reconcile this with work on the foreign field, where a new church, such as the Church of South India, seems to be clearly indicated.

In summary, there is no immediate plan for organic union in which The Methodist Church in America is involved. We are, however, exploring the field of intercommunion with our Anglican brothers. It may well be that in America these two denominations which are so close in historical relationships and forms may find it possible to bridge a gap which exists between the Church of England and Methodism in England.

Movements Toward Church Union Among American Negro Methodists

Condensed from a statement for discussion at the Executive Committee of the World Methodist Council, Birmingham, England

by Bishop Bertram W. Doyle

In the United States there are four major groups of Negro Methodists. In point of age and numerical strength, they are the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Negro membership or Central Jurisdiction of The Methodist Church. The first two call themselves "independent Negro Methodists," the third considers itself "independent" but is often described by others as "subsidized," and the fourth is regarded by the others as "related and affiliated" to a white body.

Such terms indicate necessity for, and perhaps obstacles to, movements toward union, and union has been furthered or hindered by the degree of independence and relatedness among those groups.

I will here distinguish among types of union: (a) between "independent" churches; (b) between independent and "semi-related" churches; and, (c) among independent, semi-related, and related groups. I will also list four types of movements; (a) *unification,* when union is attempted between independent churches or one independent church and a semi-related or related church; (b) *organic union,* when union is sought for all separate groups; (c) *racial union,* when all groups are considered as subjects for union; and, (d) *ecumenical union,* when all Methodists, regardless of racial origin, autonomy of action, or relatedness, move toward, or are considered as, one group.

The term "federation" will describe inter-communication, gestures of friendship or comity, and relationships based upon agreement on fundamental principles rather than organization.

The discussion will be presented with the C.M.E. Church at a hypothetical focus, since that Church has, at one time or another, entered into agreement on, or has acted in concert with others in, movements toward union. Moreover, sources were more readily available with that Church; and, needless to say, I am quite more familiar with it, and with them, than with many others.

The two independent Negro Methodist Churches—the African Methodist Episcopal, or A.M.E., Church, and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion, or Zion, Church—began negotiations in 1846. They drew up articles of agreement on union which were submitted by the Zion Church to the annual and quarterly conferences, but for some reason were not submitted to the same conferences in the A.M.E. Church, such as would be required for ratification. In 1868, the A.M.E. Church proposed a new plan which the Zion group rejected.

In 1886 both churches appointed commissions to work out other plans. There was much discussion but agreement could not be reached on the name of a new organization, whether it should be "the African Methodist Episcopal Church," or the "African Zion Methodist Episcopal Church." However, it appears that the plan was sent to some annual conferences. But in the meantime complications arose that prevented union.

In 1918, organic union was accepted as a proposal by these two churches in conjunction with the C.M.E. Church, but this also failed.

Past failures did not, however, prevent further effort, for as late as 1930 fraternal delegates from the two independent churches to the General Conference of the C.M.E. Church, professed to see unification just over the horizon. Hopes were again disappointed, however, and no union has yet eventuated.

There have been efforts for union between the A.M.E. and the C.M.E. Churches, as well as between the C.M.E. and the Zion Church. Negotiations between the A.M.E. and C.M.E. Churches began in 1870, shortly after the establishment of the latter. A letter was addressed by the first bishop of the C.M.E. Church to the A.M.E. General Conference, assuring the latter of good will but requesting it to prevent further appropriation of C.M.E. Church property, which "congregations are now occupying without legal right." Further, a desire for federation or unification, was expressed by the senior bishop, Bishop W. H. Miles, when he wrote: "If it pleases your honorable body to appoint a committee to meet us, rest assured that your committee will be met with due respect on our part."

The bishops of the A.M.E. Church replied that:

> We confess that we would have been more than pleased, if, in the Providence of God, you could have seen your way to have united with us instead of increasing the number of independent Methodist organizations by one. . . . (But) We trust that the day is not far distant when . . . all colored Methodists shall become one great, united family. Indeed, is it not desirable that the whole Methodist family should become one, under one united system of doctrine, discipline, and government, in the United States of America? If the will of the Lord be so, we hope and pray for it.

We wish that later relations between the two churches had been as cordial as those described, but they worsened, rather than improved, and the young church was stigmatized as "rebel," or "democratic," or "old slavery church" as the exchange of amenities became acrimonious.

In 1875, Bishop Miles declared that "if all the colored Methodist churches in the United States were united, it would be better for all." But, he added, "I have not much to hope for from that Church (the A.M.E.)." Shortly thereafter he made overtures to the Zion Church and to the colored membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church, suggesting that the leading men of the three groups should begin to

"agitate the question." Thus we may say that from the establishment of the C.M.E. Church there has been desire for union with all other Methodists but presumably to be preferred along racial lines.

After 1875 fraternal delegates were sent by the A.M.E. Church to the C.M.E. General Conferences no fewer than four times, and the latter reciprocated seven times, yet, harmony during the three decades seems to have deteriorated. In 1902, for example, when the C.M.E. group sought to treat with the Zion Church on the subject of unification, the A.M.E. Church was omitted. And not until 1918, when organic union occupied the center of attention, was there any communication between the two churches, and since then there has been no significant effort toward union, although fraternal delegates have been exchanged.

Proposals for union have also been exchanged between the Zion and the C.M.E. Churches. One overture was made by the C.M.E. Church as early as 1876, when the editor of its weekly journal wrote:

> This Church (the A.M.E. Zion) and our Church are on the most fraternal terms, and it is thought by many that a union of the two will be effected, if not at this session (Louisville, 1876) at least at an early date.

The hopes of the editor were dashed by later events, but fraternal relations continued between 1882 and 1896.

In 1902 a Commission of Fifteen was appointed by the C.M.E. Church to "confer with a similar Commission from the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church." But nothing tangible was done beyond the appointment of the Commission, which received instructions to omit, or on its own initiative omitted, the A.M.E. Church from the negotiations. Little or nothing further was done until 1950, when the Bishops of the Zion Church addressed a letter to the Bishops of the C.M.E. Church which said, in part:

> We reassure you of our belief and desire for a fuller ecumenical unity in our Christian family. . . . We in our communion have such an affection for the Colored Methodist communion that the time is at hand when we can give the world the evidence of our faith in unity and co-operation, by engaging in conversation on the same with your Church. We are open on the subject, and are ready to implement the approach and study the possibilities of our closer co-operation and ultimate union, which we believe God is calling us to, and will bless us in promoting.

An answer stated a willingness on the part of the C.M.E. Church "to begin conversations" on unification. The matter rests there today, an example of a persistent but unrealized hope.

Desire for unification was expressed by authorities of the C.M.E. Church in the first quadrennium of its existence. Its first bishop was in favor of organic union on a racial basis, and was doubtless the first to suggest union of all Negro Methodists. In 1899 it helped to organize the Afro-American Council, dedicated to the welfare of Negroes and the

presumable forerunner of the National Association for the Advancemen of Colored People.

Relations were maintained with the other churches, and in 1906 the C.M.E. General Conference, appointed a Commission on Federation,

> "to confer with Methodist bodies, with a view to closer co-operation in general church efforts and to consider the use of a common Hymnal, and a common form of divine service."

Yet, all was not harmonious within the C.M.E. fold, for a minister who was to become editor of the official newspaper wrote that:

> The Church should remember three years ago when men lost their reason and threatened to ruin this Church by organic union foolishness.

In 1908, a new attempt was made, when the A.M.E., Zion, and C.M.E. Churches established a Tri-Partite Conference and met twice in that year. The Conference, however, gave main attention to "closer fellowship, and a more harmonious relation," and little to union.

Seven years later the Negro membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church met the other churches at Cincinnati "to consider questions of federation and co-operation, and such other questions as might direct the attention of those in attendance to the ultimate unification of Negro Methodist bodies."

At the meeting,

> While questions which related to organic union were approached with caution and without commitment, it was certainly evident that the meeting was called to bring into closer relation the churches represented—a relation that might, in the future, evolve into organic union.

The Methodist Episcopal Church in 1916 called a "Working Conference on the Union of American Methodism," at Northwestern University, the purpose being

> To gather into a clear, impartial and scholarly statement the facts and considerations relating to union, in the hope of helping to a wise decision those bodies and persons whose duty it will be to act officially.

That Conference was to hear a report from a Committee on Organic Union. The report was overwhelmingly adopted. It declared,

> Believing as we do that organic union is practicable, desirable, and feasible, we recommend: That the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church unite organically into one body, under the denominational title of The United Methodist Episcopal Church.

The General Conferences of the A.M.E. and Zion Churches adopted similar resolutions in 1920, and passed the resolution down to the annual conferences for ratification, as the C.M.E. Church had done in

1918. The Report encountered stormy seas. It has been stated that the C.M.E. Conferences defeated ratification, and that the other churches did not vote on what was so obviously a dead issue. Another version was that it was voted on in the A.M.E. and Zion conferences but the results were not reported.

Whatever the case, in 1921, the senior bishop of the C.M.E. Church, Bishop R. S. Williams, said that the resolution had been defeated "chiefly because of the attitude of Bishop Phillips, and some of the unwise and rather indiscrete things that came out in the papers of the Colored Methodist Episcopal and African Methodist Episcopal Churches." He said that he continued to desire union but had lost interest when he saw that "more harm than good would come if we undertook to force the question."

In January, 1921, the official paper of the A.M.E. Church editorialized as follows:

> Organic union for the next twenty-five years is only a dream. But federation among organically separate churches is a possibility, and if undertaken in sincerity, will lead to organic union, possibly in another generation. Let us look meanwhile to a common hymn book, a common discipline, (as far as possible), a common theological seminary, common Sunday School literature, federated social service work, and an united evangelistic campaign. . . . We must find a way or make one by which the three churches may work in harmony.

Enthusiasm in the C.M.E. Church was at about the same ebb. The General Conference in 1922 made no mention of organic union save to vote that a committee be appointed to study the plan. There is doubt that the committee was ever appointed or made a report. Seven years later an antagonist of the movement wrote:

> These churches (A.M.E., A.M.E. Zion, and C.M.E.) should now undertake to cultivate on a larger scale the spirit of unity, the essence of co-operation, the beneficence of federation and fraternalism, and leave the larger and more complex question of organic union to further generations.

Disillusionment on the subject of union seemed universal. But in 1930 a fraternal delegate to the C.M.E. Church from the A.M.E. Church expressed the opinion that "the day is not yet come (for organic union), but the dawn of a new day is breaking." He hoped that "the grand old A.M.E. Church, with her sisters (may one day be) clasping hands in one grand body."

The Message of the Bishops to the General Conference of the C.M.E. Church in 1934 referred to an organization known as "The Federation of Negro Religious Denominations in the U.S.A.," and recommended affiliation with it to improve the social, economic, political, and industrial condition of the race. Although no mention was made of spiritual or ecclesiastical matters, a committee was appointed to affiliate, which it did in public meetings, after which the Federation and the committee

dropped from sight. Before the same Conference Bishop Noah Williams, fraternal delegate from the A.M.E. Church, said:

> I have not been authorized to speak for the A.M.E Church on the advisability of organic union among the three Negro Methodist denominations, but certainly there should be unity of purpose and action in our leadership of the race.

Within four years, however, the climate seemed to change. The Bishops of the A.M.E. Church invited the C.M.E. Church "to choose representatives of your denomination to meet with us, and again approach the question of denominational union among Methodists. . . . We are willing to go forward until we can find common ground upon which we are willing to stand together." The invitation was referred to the Bishops of the C.M.E. Church and was not again heard from.

Yet 1938 was a year of great and good will among Negro Methodists, though not all denominations presented union as the only method of reaching agreement. The fraternal delegate from the Zion Church to the C.M.E. Church stated:

> "We want . . . fraternal spirit to take on a larger meaning than mere friendly greetings—once in four years. I trust that it will ripen into denominational comity."

But he stopped there, for he knew that although his utterances were informal, they could be subject to misconstruction; and he did not wish to commit his Church to a definite course of action.

During the next twelve years movements toward union almost vanished. However, in 1950 the C.M.E. Church set up a "Commission on Union with Other Churches." No instructions were given to the Commission, but the implication was that union was not to be confined to Negro Methodist churches. No report of the Commission has yet been made; it will doubtless be submitted in 1954.

Undoubtedly, the philosophy of racial separation has given way to what is now known at least among Negroes, as integration, which means affiliation and association upon equal terms, without regard to racial affiliation. There is a possibility that within the next quarter of a century, interest or enthusiasm for union or unification will be stimulated.

Expectation in that field was given impetus by the election of Negro bishops in 1920 and at subsequent General Conferences by The Methodist Church. Negroes have interpreted such action as indication that they need no longer move toward union solely on a racial basis; and that they would not be forced or asked to withdraw from fellowship in larger racially dissimilar bodies. A corollary is that if and when Negroes are brought into union it may be as members of a universal church, dedicated to the principles of democracy as well as to the doctrines and practices of John Wesley.

This hope was expressed earlier by Bishop Phillips in these words:

> The election (in 1920 of Bishops R. E. Jones and M. W. Clair) was a fitting climax . . . and further established the fact that this great body of our Protestant Christianity could rise above racial prejudice and give its colored membership a direct leadership without fearing that the main body of the Church would be contaminated, if the colored bishops should happen to touch it here and there.

It is not to be thought, however, that the C.M.E. Church is alone interested in ecumenical union. Dr. H. T. Medford, a fraternal delegate to the C.M.E. General Conference in 1942 and later a bishop in the A.M.E. Zion, gave evidence of the existence of a wider interest, when he said:

> The Methodists of this country WILL NOT be one so long as there are a million and a half C.M.E., A.M.E., and Zion Methodists whose hearts, like John Wesley's have been "strangely warmed," and are still outside the so-called Methodist unification.

Such is a very brief survey of movements toward union of Negro Methodists over a period of more than a century. Plans, varied in type and significant in number (there scarcely has been a quadrennium since 1846 when some type of union was not projected) and repeated in experience, have characterized the inter-relations of branches of Methodism. The results would not seem to justify the expenditure of such effort except for the fact that by its very persistence the activity indicated a deep-lying yearning and hope for eventual consolidation of forces. Where such hope exists results in terms of formal goals must eventually be attained.

It can scarcely be doubted that patience is the one trait that characterizes the relations of Negro Methodists as they advance and retreat in their movements toward union. Such movements may often seem without point. Yet the advances, retreats, sorties and, upon occasion, seeming surrender, are not entirely aimless. They are rather human efforts, subject to all the disabilities and disadvantages of human thought and action. Perhaps, like the Israelites who wandered forty years in the wilderness, Negro Methodists are undergoing a period of discipline that prepares them for a different and more strenuous type of activity that will be needed when they have reached their Promised Land.

Certainly, reasons for, if not causes of, their failure may be discovered in circumstances and situations surrounding the origin and establishment of the several Negro Methodist branches, certainly in the attitudes developed in relative isolation, perhaps in the type and personalities of leaders, and definitely in the type of organization shown as they develop their own institutions. With reference to origins it must be remembered that the four groups sprang from three types of situ-

ations. The A.M.E. and Zion groups voluntarily withdrew, and under protest, from a type of union in which they had already participated. The C.M.E. Church was set aside, with their agreement but not necessarily voluntarily, if some of their brothers are allowed to give witness. The Negro membership of The Methodist Church remains in the parent body, straining at restrictions occasionally, but withal satisfied with and not too desirous of change in present arrangement, and as some of their colleagues in other churches often charge, determined to have no dealings with "outsiders" from other Negro Methodist branches. To bring those four into a mutually acceptable arrangement would conceivably tax the wisdom of Solomon if not the patience of Job.

With respect to attitudes there are, of course, the crust of custom, the lag of tradition, and certainly a fear of new arrangements. What forces move men, what ideas are more fixed, than men's fears that they may be absorbed in larger movements, with the consequent loss of identity, symbolized by the names by which men and their organizations are known? What greater fear than that of being cast among and forced to live with persons whose hostility is known and has been previously exhibited? What fear is greater than that of the unknown? To enter into relations of union, however religious in scope or noble in motive, requires faith far greater than many men can muster; nay more, it requires continued and continuing dependence upon a force higher and greater than themselves.

In no other field of which I am aware have individual men exerted more influence than in the field of union among Negro Methodists. It can doubtless be demonstrated that many of the failures have been due to the influence of men who either feared for themselves or for their groups.

Again, with regard to organizational problems, in any move toward union of Negro Methodists one group or one man seems always to possess a "veto power." The situation is not unlike that in the United Nations, where I think the principle is accepted that unless unanimous action can be achieved the results will not be lasting. Unanimity of purpose and concert in action rather than unilateral action or majority sanction may eventually be the answer to union among Methodists, of whom Negro Methodists constitute a formidable proportion.

Finally, we cannot escape the reasoning that stimulus to union must arise from within the group. Evidence is not lacking that pressures for union have occasionally come from sources outside the churches concerned. Public opinion carries its own weight, of course, and neither men nor groups can long resist its pressures and demands. Yet the basic power of public opinion seems to consist in its ability to change men's attitudes.

So we confess in conclusion that there is no union among the four major Negro denominations, despite one hundred years or movements toward such union.

Notes from the World Parish

Climax of Australia Mission

by THE REV. ALAN WALKER, *Director*
(From the British Recorder)

Australia's Mission to the Nation reached a dramatic climax on September 27 in a great thanksgiving service in the Sydney Town Hall. Crowds began to queue for the service at 2 P.M., although it did not commence until 7:30 P.M. By the time it began seven city halls and churches were crowded and many people stood in the open-air listening to amplifiers. Wireless and land-line links carried the service to churches and halls all over Australia. It was estimated that 500,000 joined in the service across the country.

On the platform in the Sydney Town Hall was the President-General of The Methodist Church (the Rev. Dr. Calvert Barber), the Anglican Primate of Australia (Dr. Mowll) and other leaders of the Churches. The meeting was a notable demonstration of Church unity. The Anglican Cathedral, the city's Presbyterian and Congregational churches held early services that Sunday night and then became overflow centers for the Mission to the Nation.

At the close of his address, the preacher, the Australian Missioner, made an appeal for full commitment to God in Jesus Christ. At that moment in all buildings where the service was held the minister in charge moved toward a counselling room. Later it was learned that all over the country people came boldly forward, hundreds receiving Christ. It was indeed a night to remember. Thus in triumph Australia's share in the World Methodist Campaign came to a thrilling climax.

The Sydney week altogether was a worthy conclusion to the Mission. It began on Sunday, September 20, when 25,000 Methodists marched through the streets of the city in a notable procession of witness. Twice a day for the week crowds thronged the Sydney Town Hall. At midday a short address on such topics as "How Do You Know There is a God?" and "Is the Bible True?" was given, followed by questions. At night the mass meetings were led by the Crusader Choir of 600 young people. A Citizens' Dinner was attended by the Governor of the State and the Premier. On the second Saturday of the series the Sydney Stadium was crowded with 10,000 young people for a session on: "The Christian View of Love, Courtship and Marriage."

When the Sydney week was over it was found that 83,000 had actually attended the meetings in the eight-day series.

There is no doubt that something tremendous has happened in Australia during the Mission. The campaign was planned by the official courts of the Church on a scale not before attempted. It cost

the Church over £30,000—and much more than was needed was given by the people. It was based on the local church, every one of the 2,700 churches of Methodism being urged to go into action. The extent to which all were drawn into the effort is shown by the fact that of 119 circuits in the State of South Australia 104 held special missions during the six months. The Australian Missioner visited fifty-two centres across Australia, travelling 35,000 miles, holding series of meetings. No fewer than 331,000 people attended these great services. Press and radio coverage of the Mission was greater than has been given to any recent Christian event in Australia.

Australian Methodism is seeking to understand why this particular Mission caught the imagination of the whole nation. Several answers are being given and in each answer is something of the secret of the Mission's appeal.

First, the Mission was the first great national crusade in Australia's history. In the past the Churches in Australia have operated on a diocesan or State basis. There was much inspiration in the whole Church campaigning together.

Second, a large volume of prayer surrounded the Mission. The Church prayed as never before, and, of course, prayer works miracles.

Third, the obstruction which denominationalism is to evangelism was largely overcome. The word "Methodist" did not appear in the Mission's title. It was stated: *"The purpose of the Mission is not to make Methodists but to multiply the number of worshipping Christians in Australia."*

Fourth, an ambitious and imaginative use of Press, radio, the printed page and posters was made. A weekly radio play, *Drama with a Challenge,* carried the message over a network of sixty-four stations to the people all over the land. A million copies of the Mission's message in manifesto form was placed within letter boxes. Almost 75,000 of the Mission's publications were sold.

Fifth, the most was made of demonstrations of faith through processions and mass meetings. Indeed, the Mission showed that the day of the mass meeting is not over.

Sixth, the message of the Mission was a relevant message. It was both personal and national in intention. The first purpose of the Mission was to offer individual men and women Christ, but also the Mission sought to come to grips with the "sore points" of Australian life.

The Mission to the Nation was thus the first break-through by a Church to the total community in this century. It did reach "the outsider." An independent investigation by a Brisbane paper as to those attending the meetings in that city showed that forty per cent were non-churchgoers.

The chief results of the Mission are seen in the Church becoming more confident of its mission and more certain of its strategy. Australia generally was made to talk about the Christian faith. Lastly, men and women were converted to God. Homes were healed, em-

bezzlers confessed, drunkards found Christ and numbers of young men and women offered for full-time service through the Christian Ministry and the Deaconess Order.

The question being asked all over Australia is—what now? It is clear the Mission must go on. The break-through must be exploited. The lessons learned must be woven into the life of the Church. Plans are now being made to carry on the Mission. Perhaps, under God, it will yet be seen to be the first vital sign of the coming great religious revival for which all who love Christ in Australia wait and pray.

South Africa Methodists Condemn Government Racial Policy

The Conference of The Methodist Church in South Africa has condemned the racial policy of the Malan government call *apartheid,* which severely segregates and largely disfranchises the non-white population. The resolution of the Conference was as follows:

The Conference has noted with grave concern the deterioration in race relationships which the past year has witnessed.

It is confirmed in its conviction, so often expressed, that the problems which confront us will never be solved apart from the power of the Christian faith and the application of the Christian ethic.

These values must become the determining factors in South Africa's racial policy.

The mind of the conference is expressed as follows:—

1. In the application of the principle of *apartheid* through successive legislative acts the sacredness of personality and the potentiality of men and women as individuals are ignored.

Differentiation is mass differentiation on the ground of colour alone. In such circumstances injustice is inevitable.

2. The Government has found it necessary again and again to amend its own *apartheid* legislation.

These modifications constitute in part a tacit admission of the fact that the non-European is already an integral part of our general population and essential to our economy.

> Failure openly to recognise this fact has led to a form of *apartheid* which operates just so far as suits the needs of the European.

Any benefit to any racial group which might be held to result from this situation is more than offset by the sense of resentment and frustration which is aroused in those whose destiny is decided by the acts of a legislative body in which they have no effective representation.

3. The scales are heavily loaded against the non-European communities who comprise the bulk of our total population and the

present legislation works restrictively on them alone.

4. The Conference appeals to the Government to acknowledge and respect the human rights of all sections of our population, particularly in such vital matters as the acquisition and ownership of property in freehold, the right to trade and the right to be educated along accepted lines now prevailing, and thus to open the door to the realisation of the legitimate aspirations of every racial group.

> The Conference is convinced that statesmanship on the highest level must be characterised by sympathy of attitude and generosity of action toward the underprivileged.

This would have an immediate effect in increasing the general happiness and contentment of our whole population.

In making this appeal the Conference declares that it seeks to serve only the highest interests of all the people of our country among whom our Church lives and works as an indigenous Christian community.

5. Speaking in the name of an inter-racial Church, the Conference gladly recognises that, in the words of an earlier declaration, "We are being called in these days to demonstrate to the world the power and spirit of a multi-racial fellowship within the Church based on the unity which results from common membership of the living Body of Christ which knows no racial barriers."

The Conference renews its former pledge as follows: —

"We resolve by the help of God to make it our purpose to achieve such a unity both in the inward and invisible spirit and in the outward and visible manifestation; and to that end we dedicate ourselves as a Church of Jesus Christ.

"We set ourselves with patience, care and loving kindness to prepare the minds of our people of all races within the Church to embrace this ideal, to accept its implications, and to work for its realisation."

The Journal of Bishop Francis Asbury

The World Methodist Council and both the International and the American Methodist Historical Societies are sponsoring the new annotated Standard Edition of Asbury's *Journal*. This basic document of American Methodism, and one of the most important of World Methodism, has been out of print for more than a century and is virtually unknown to present-day preachers and members. It has never been properly edited. Asbury's letters, which are to be included, have never been collected.

Asbury is one of the sixty great American personalities whose works have been recommended for publication by the United States Historical Publications Commission and that body is co-operating with the committee in charge of the project.

The work is progressing under the direction of an editorial com-

mittee composed of Bishop Paul N. Garber, of Richmond, Virginia, Dr. Jacob S. Payton of Washington, D. C., Dr. J. Manning Potts, Editor of *The Upper Room*, and Dr. Elmer T. Clark, Secretary of the Historical Societies and the World Methodist Council, who is exercising general editorship. All of these have published works in the field of Methodist history.

Acting with the editorial committee are consulting editors from various states, selected because of specialized and expert knowledge. Most of these are authors of local Methodist histories.

Among the consultants are: Dr. Vernon Hampton, New Jersey; Rev. A. B. Moss, New York; Rev. Robert H. Dolliver, New England; Dr. John O. Gross, Kentucky; Rev. A. D. Betts, South Carolina; Dr. I. P. Martin, East Tennessee; Rev. Cullen T. Carter, Middle Tennessee; Dr. A. M. Pierce and Rev. Dow Kirkpatrick, Georgia; Rev. W. G. Smeltzer, Pennsylvania. Special work in collecting and editing Asbury's letters is being done by Dr. J. Manning Potts and Rev. Robert H. Dolliver, and other historians will be brought into cooperation as the work proceeds.

Notes on the first volume of the *Journal* have almost been completed in the first draft and much has been done on the second volume. Collection of the letters is nearing completion. The published product will perhaps be similar to the works of Curnock and Telford on Wesley's *Journal* and *Letters*. A series of maps will illustrate the wide travels of Asbury.

It is hoped that the work can be published in Great Britain or America early in 1956 in order to be introduced at the General and Jurisdictional of the Conferences of the American church and the World Methodist Council and Conference which will meet that year. This is the greatest Methodist historical publication of the present generation and will constitute the major contribution in a field which, in America at least, has long been neglected.

British Conference Committee, World Methodist Council

The British Committee of the World Methodist Council recently held a full meeting at Westminster under the chairmanship of the President of the Conference, Dr. Donald O. Soper. The actions of the World Executive which met last summer at Birmingham were reviewed and special attention was devoted to the principles for a written constitution which were adopted there. These principles are to be further developed and the first draft of a constitution will be presented to the World Executive at Evanston, Illinois, next summer.

The British committee expressed much interest in the principle which provides that all union schemes involving Methodists in any part of the world should be

reviewed by the World Methodist Council, acting in an advisory capacity only, before adoption. Such schemes are approaching final form in Ceylon and North India.

Provision was made for the next European Methodist Conference to be held next June at Reuti, Switzerland. The first such continental conference was held last year at Frankfurt am Main, Germany. The next conference will consider the Methodist theological emphasis and Methodism in the Ecumenical movement.

Two Methodist representatives from Italy have recently visited England and steps are being taken to publish a pamphlet in Italian on World Methodism.

Meeting of American Sections

Under the auspices of the American Committee on Faith and Order, Church Relations Section, World Methodist Council, a meeting of representatives of all the Sections of the Council in the United States will be held in Cincinnati, Ohio, January 13-14, 1954.

The groups involved are The Methodist Church, the African Methodist Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, the Free Methodist Church, the Primitive Methodist Church, and the Wesleyan Methodist Church. A similar meeting was called in 1952 by the Commission on Church Union of The Methodist Church, but because of the denominational character of the sponsoring body The World Methodist Council was asked to take over the 1954 gathering.

The purpose is to cultivate fraternal relations between the various Methodist bodies in the hope that the way to eventual union may be opened.

Perkins to Head British Free Church Council

The Rev. E. Benson Perkins of Birmingham, England, one of the Secretaries of the World Methodist Council, has been named as Vice Moderator of the National Free Church Federal Council in Great Britain, succeeding the late Dr. Howard Watkins-Jones. He will be inducted as Moderator at the Congress of the Council which will be held at Worthing in March.

The National Free Church Federal Council corresponds in Great Britain to the National Council of the Churches of Christ in America. It is a federation of the several cooperating Protestant free churches.

Death of Dr. Watkins-Jones

The Methodist world has been shocked and grieved at the recent death of the Rev. Dr. Howard Watkins-Jones after a brief illness at his home in Headingly in England. He was President of the British Conference in 1951 and thus became a familiar figure to those who attended the Oxford Conference of the World Methodist Council.

His death removed from the leadership of church life a Methodist minister of great ability and personal charm. His distinguished scholarship was revealed during his undergraduate years at Cambridge, from which university he ultimately secured his doctorate for his work on the Holy Spirit.

He spent eighteen years in pastoral work before being called to the Banks Crossfield Chair of Church History and the History of Doctrine at the Wesley College, Headingly, Leeds. He was Chairman of the Leeds Methodist District for four years and in 1951 was President of the Methodist Conference.

One of his great interests was that of church unity, and in the British Council of Churches and the Assembly of the World Council of Churches, particularly in the field of Faith and Order, he was a distinctive figure. He rendered conspicuous service in the World Methodist Council and in the Lambeth Conversations on Church Relations.

In September, 1953, he became principal of Wesley College and as Vice Moderator of the National Free Church Federal Council was looking forward to his year as Moderator. Those who knew him best will remember him not only for his scholarship and his wide service to the church, but for his friendliness, sense of humour and glowing spiritual experience.

Plaque on Charles Wesley's House

One of the blue and white plaques, which the London County Council fixes to buildings or sites of historic interest, was recently unveiled by the Rev. Colin A. Roberts, ex-President of the Conference, on the site of the London home of Charles Wesley.

Among those who took part in the ceremony was Mrs. Edith Van Biene, a great-great-grand-daughter of the "sweet singer of Methodism."

From 1771 until his death in 1778, Charles Wesley lived at No. 1 Great Chesterfield Street, St. Marylebone. Great Chesterfield Street has changed its name and the site is now occupied by a public house on the corner of Westmoreland and Wheatley streets. On the wall above the saloon bar in Wheatley Street the tablet has been placed. It reads: —

Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, divine and hymn writer, lived and died in a house on this site and his sons, Charles 1757-1834, and Samuel 1766-1837, musicians, also lived here.

Representatives of The Methodist Church to the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Evanston, Illinois, August 15-31, 1954

Bishops: Sante Uberto Barbieri, Rivadavia 4044, Buenos Aires, Argentina
J. W. E. Bowen, 250 Auburn Avenue, Northeast, Atlanta, Georgia
Charles W. Brashares, 77 Washington Street, Chicago 2, Illinois
Fred P. Corson, 1701 Arch Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Costen J. Harrell, First Methodist Church, Charlotte 2, N. C.
Ivan Lee Holt, 20 North Kingshighway, St. Louis, Missouri
Gerald H. Kennedy, 125 East Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles 12, Calif.
W. Earl Ledden, 317 East Jefferson Street, Syracuse 2, New York
William C. Martin, 1910 Main Street, Dallas 1, Texas
Arthur J. Moore, 63 Auburn Avenue, Northeast, Atlanta 3, Georgia
G. Bromley Oxnam, 100 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington 2, D.C.
Glenn R. Phillips, 317 Trinity Building, 1820 Broadway, Denver 2, Colo.
J. Waskom Pickett, 12 Boulevard Road, Delhi, India
Richard C. Raines, 305 Underwriters Building, Indianapolis 4, Ind.
Jose Valencia, Box 756, Manila, Philippine Islands
Ralph A. Ward, R.D. 3, Box 115-a, Hendersonville, North Carolina
Frederick Wunderlich, Ginnheimer Landstrasse, 180, Frankfurt a.M.—Ginnheim, Germany

Ministers: Harold A. Bosley, First Methodist Church, Evanston, Illinois
G. Alfred Brown, Box 41, Waco, Texas
James R. Chubb, Trinity Methodist Church, Grand Island, Neb.
Norman W. Clemens, First Methodist Church, Wilkes-Barre, Penna.
M. L. Harris, President, Philander Smith College
Thomas S. Harris, 405 Elm Street, Troy, Alabama
Fred G. Holloway, President, Drew University
Melvin K. Medlock, Columbia, S. C.
Oscar T. Olson, 1919 East 107 Street, Cleveland 6. Ohio
Ferdinand Sigg, 69 Badenerstrasse, Zurich, Switzerland
J. O. Smith, Central Methodist Church, Spartanburg, S. C.
Ralph W. Sockman, Christ Church, New York, New York
Fred B. Trotter, First Methodist Church, Alhambra, Calif.
John R. Wilkins, 1525 Ralston Avenue, Burlingame, Calif.
Elmer T. Clark, Lake Junaluska, N. C. (Consultant representing the World Methodist Council)

Laymen: Mrs. Frank G. Brooks, Mount Vernon, Iowa
Miss Sarah Chakko, Isabella Thoburn College, Lucknow, India

A. S. Claxton, 234 Lytton Ave., Pittsburgh, Penna.
Dr. Charles G. Howard, 12243 Potter St., Eugene, Oregon
W. W. Jackson, 2136 W. Summit St., San Antonio, Texas
William Kung, c/o Bishop Ralph Ward, 22 Hennessey Road, Hong Kong, China
Mrs. Frances Huntington Martin, 335 California Ave., Royal Oak, Mich.
J. Earl Moreland, Randolph-Macon College, Ashland, Va.
Charles C. Parlin, 20 Exchange Place, New York 5, New York
Harry V. Richardson, Gammon Theological Seminary, Atlanta, Georgia

Distinguished Visitors to America

The Rev. Dr. W. E. Sangster, celebrated minister at Westminster Central Hall, London, and chairman of the World Methodist Council's Committee on Evangelism, will visit the United States next summer. Among his other engagements Dr. Sangster will spend a week at Ocean City, New Jersey, and will be the preacher at the annual Candler Camp Meeting at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, in August.

Dr. Sangster is now on a world tour in the course of which he will visit Australia, New Zealand, India, Ceylon, Fiji and other areas. He is commissioned to contact the Methodists everywhere on behalf of the World Methodist Council and to promote a continuation of the World Mission of Evangelism.

The Rev. Dr. Leslie Weatherhead of London will also visit the United States in the spring of 1954. He is one of the world's famous Methodist preachers, assigned by the British Conference to the noted City Temple in London. Since the destruction of his church during the war his congregation has been worshipping in the Marylebone Presbyterian Church.

Other outstanding Methodist leaders from many nations will be in America next summer as delegates at the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Evanston, Illinois, in August. Nineteen of these will represent British Methodism and others will come from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India and other parts of the world.

Among those from England will be Dr. Donald O. Soper, current President of the Conference, Rev. Colin A. Roberts, ex-President, Rev. W. Russell Shearer, President Designate, Dr. Eric W. Baker, Secretary, Dr. Dorothy Farrar, ex-Vice-President, Dr. Harold Roberts, Vice-President of the World Methodist Council, and the Rev. E. Benson Perkins, Secretary of the Council.

Churches and groups in America desiring to secure the services of any of these distinguished leaders should write to Dr. Elmer T. Clark, Secretary of the World Methodist Council, Lake Junaluska, North Carolina.

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Bishop Sante Uberto Barbieri, Rivadavia, 4044, Buenos Aires, Argentina
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Dr. Jacob S. Payton, 5717 Virginia Ave., Falls Church, Va.
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